

Residential Design Standards in Saint Paul

Proposed Interim Ordinance –
Amendments to general design standards

February 4, 2009

The concern...

- High number of vacant buildings
 - 1,949 residential buildings of 1,999 total
- Growing number of vacant lots, partially as a result of demolitions

The questions...

- What will replace these buildings and go up on these lots? How might buildings be fixed up?

A few recent examples...



House on Lincoln

A few recent examples...



House on E. Maryland Ave

A few recent examples...



Twinhomes on Whittall

Amendments to zoning code

- §63.110. General Design Standards
- §61.401. Site Plan Review
- §63.316. Paving

§63.110. General Design Standards

- Existing design standards (§63.110) have only applied to uses that require site plan review
- Single- and two-family residential development have **not** required site plan review
- The **interim** ordinance **requires** site plan review for single- and two-family structures

This is the amended §63.110.
General Design Standards ...

The following design standards shall be used unless the applicant can demonstrate that there are circumstances unique to the property that make compliance impractical or unreasonable.

Other amendments to §63.110

1. Any building façade that faces a public street







New language – building façades facing a public street

- Primary entrances on new principal structures shall face the primary abutting public street, or be linked to that street by a clearly defined and visible walkway or courtyard. Additional secondary entrances may be oriented to a secondary street or parking area. Primary entries shall be clearly visible and identifiable from the street, and delineated with elements such as roof overhangs, recessed entries, landscaping, or similar design features. Any side of a building facing an abutting public street should use the same building materials and other architectural treatments as principal façades.



2. The area of window & door openings on above grade exterior walls of residential structures





New language – window & door openings on above grade exterior walls of residential structures

- For principal residential buildings, above grade window and door openings (excluding the area of garage doors) shall comprise at least **ten** (10) percent of the total area of all exterior walls and **fifteen** (15) percent of the total area of exterior walls facing a public street or sidewalk.





Test #1

Test #1: Window & door percentages

house on Hatch

- front: 20% ✓
- back: 9%
- east side: 0%
- west side: 8%
- Total: 7% ☒



Test #2



Test #2

Test #2: Window & door percentages

house on Charles

- front: 21% ✓
- back: 17%
- left elevation: 0%
- right elevation: 3%
- Total: 10% ✓



Test #3

Test #3: Window & door percentages

house on Milford

- front: 15% ✓
- back: 8%
- left elevation: 4%
- right elevation: 10%
- Total: 9% ☒



Test #4

Test #4: Window & door percentages

house on Stanford

- front: 25% ✓
- back: 8%
- left elevation: 9%
- right elevation : 9%
- Total: 11.5% ✓



Test #5: Window & door percentages

house on E. 6th St

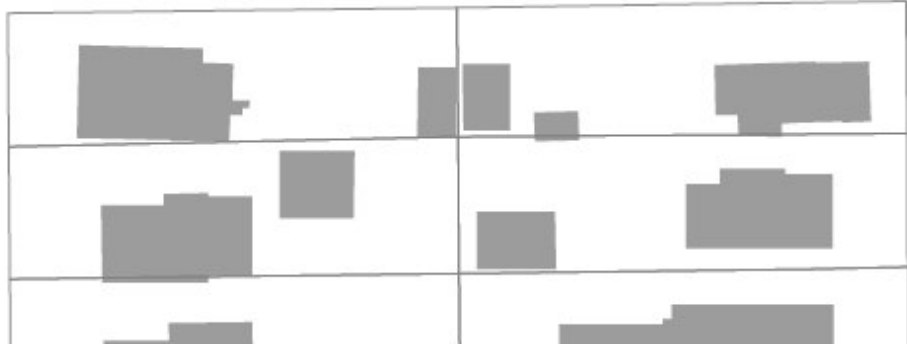
- front: 17% ✓
- back: 10%
- left elevation: 9%
- right elevation: 4%
- Total: 8% ☒

3. Access to, and setbacks of, residential garages, and the width of garage doors as a percentage of the width of the principal structure

New language – access to residential garages

- Access to off-street parking for one-family through four-family and townhouse dwellings **shall** be from an abutting improved alley when available; provided that on corner lots, access may be from the side street.





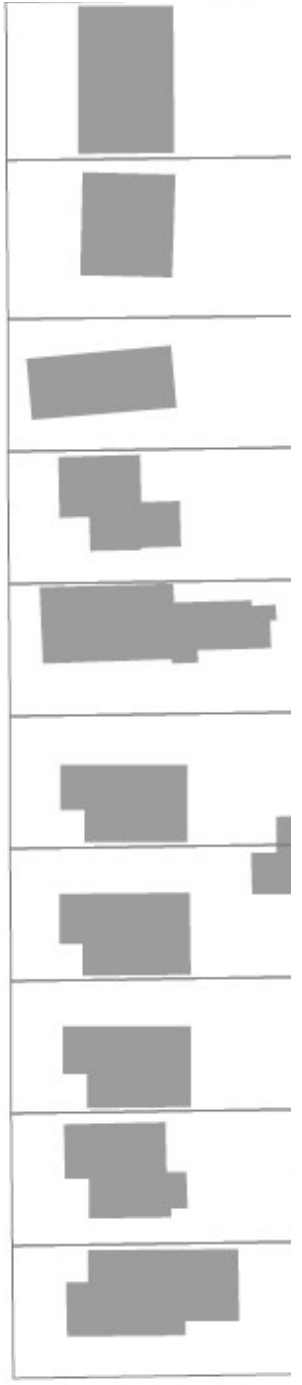
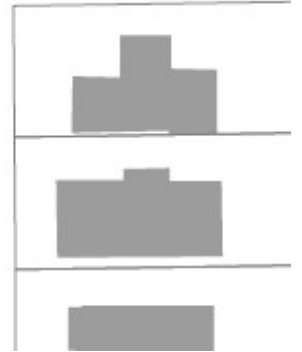
CYPRESS ST



alley

1011
E. 6th
St

6TH STE



New language – The width of residential garage doors

- Except in the rear yard, . . . garage doors shall **not exceed** sixty (60) percent of the width of the principal structure.



Garage is over
60% of width of
house

New language – The setbacks of residential garages

- Except in the rear yard, garages that face and front on a public street shall be set back from abutting public streets at least as far as the principal structure (in the case of attached garages, at least as far as the non-garage part of the structure). . .





4. The width and extent of residential driveways in front yards

New section – residential driveways in front yards

works with changes to §34.08 about paving of residential lots

- For one-family through four-family dwellings, and for townhouses with garage doors that face and front on a public street, **driveways** in front yards shall be no more than **twelve** (12) feet in width. A driveway apron up to four (4) feet wider than the garage door may extend thirty (30) feet from the garage before reducing to a width of twelve (12) feet.



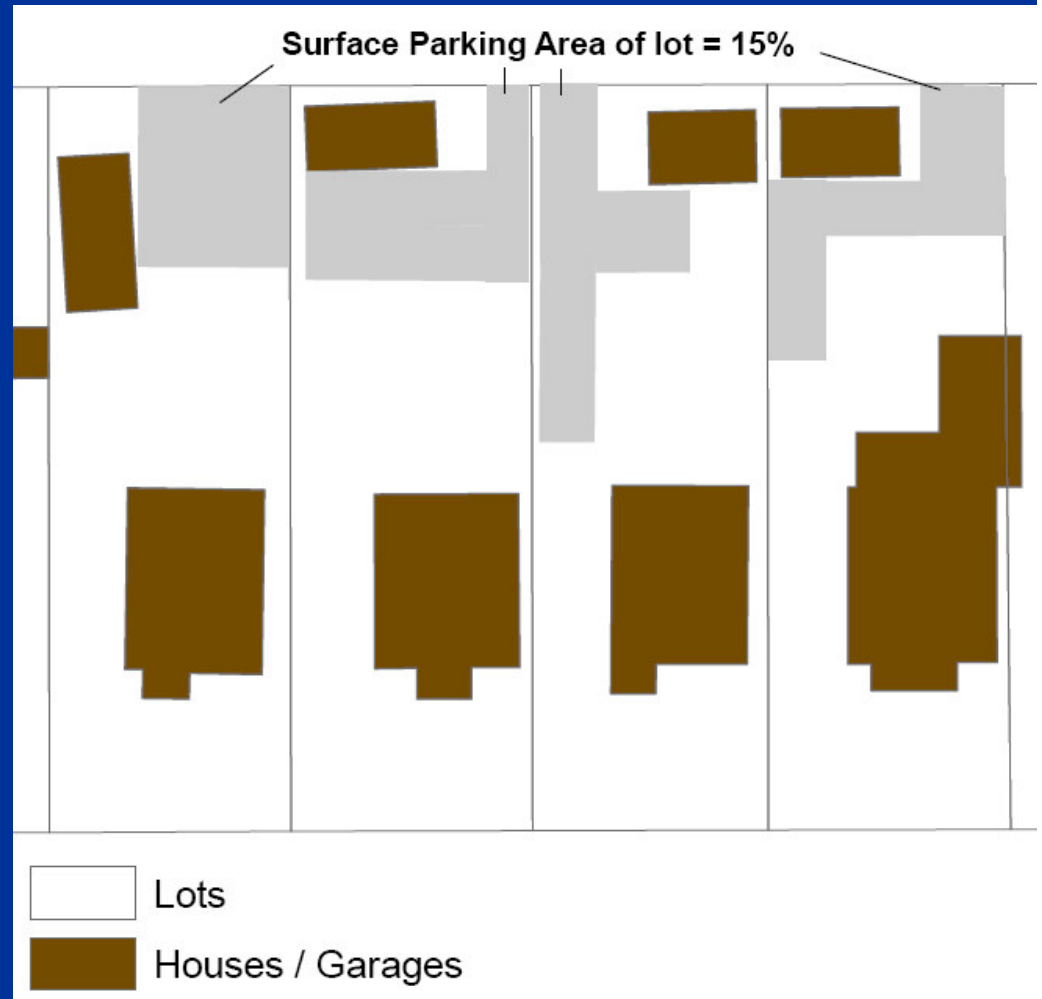
**Paved area in
front yard**

01/24/2004

Also,

New language - §63.316 Paving

- All parking spaces, driveways and off-street parking facilities shall be paved with asphalt or other durable, dustless surfacing . . . The total amount of surface parking for one-family and two-family dwellings shall not exceed **fifteen** (15) percent of the lot area.



Summary of interim ordinance

- One amendment would clarify that §63.110 applies to all residential structures
- Other amendments represent minor edits to §63.110
 - Would prohibit blank and “windowless” walls from facing a public street
 - Would clarify standards about garage placement
 - Would limit the extent to which driveways can take up a large portion of residential front yards
- Small edits of §61.402 and §63.316
 - Site plan review – would require building elevations
 - Amount of surface parking as % of residential lot area

Still considering...

- Site plan review fees in §61.302
 - What is an appropriate fee for a site plan review of 1- and 2-unit structures?
 - A separate study of DSI fees is underway
- Implementation questions about the interim ordinance
 - City staff is now suggesting revisions to the language to clarify it
- How far regulations should go, in terms of:
 - Costs to those developing 1- and 2-family structures?